Report on Size Notation.

[NOTE.—This Report was presented at the Cambridge Meeting of the L.A.U.K., and was put back for further consideration by the Committee, which consisted of the following members of the Association:—Messrs. BULLEN, GARNETT, KNAPMAN, NICHOLSON, TEDDER, THOMAS, CHARLES WELCH, and B. R. WHEATLEY. At the same time MR. CHARLES MADELEY was added to the Committee.

As so long an interval has elapsed since the Report was presented, the Council of the L.A.U.K. think it desirable that it should be reprinted, in order that members may have an opportunity of carefully considering it with a view to a full discussion of the subject, which it is hoped will take place very shortly.]

THE object of the Committee has been to construct a scheme which, in giving a nearly exact definition of size in height, should interfere as little as possible with the nomenclature of the past, and, if practicable, should solve the difficulty of a combination of size and signature-notation in one plan.

They have had to consider what are the chief errors which require a remedy, and it seems to them that they have consisted more in a deficient than in an excessive use of existing terms, and in a want of exactitude in their application:—

1. One error has been a frequent confounding of folios and quartos, or of quartos and octavos, in the cataloguing of the earlier printed books, owing to cropt copies of the former, in either case, simulating the sizes of the latter.

2. A large number of small 8° books have been usually described as 12°.

3. 12° and 18° have been frequently confounded with each other.

4. Octavos, quartos, and folios of all sizes have been merely so denominated, without any modifying terms to define varieties differing several inches in height.

The error first mentioned can be easily remedied by strict observance of the fact that the paper in folios and octavos has perpendicular—and in quartos, horizontal—wire or water lines. The other errors can all be avoided by greater attention to exactitude in noticing both size and signature.

Some differences of opinion have rendered it necessary to leave the question open on one point, by an alternative adoption of two forms of nomenclature, viz., either the use of the term *large*, or of its equivalents, *imperial* and *royal*, the argument for the former being a reduction in the number of terms used in the table; that for the latter, that they are sizes well-known to, and used by, librarians, and tolerably well understood by the literary public, and in that respect differ from the numerous technical terms of the smaller-sized papers in each form, which for library purposes it is desirable to ignore.

When it is considered that a system of size notation for ordinary catalogues should be one that can be made to fit the varieties of size which have been in use in this and other countries during four centuries, the subject can well be understood to be full of difficulties. The Committee, after making experiments on both old and modern books, desire to offer the table at the close of this Report as an attempt at a solution of these difficulties.

The exact naming of book sizes according to the number of leaves to a signature is an impossibility. No stress must be laid on the supposition that the alterations in size of machine-made papers have been the cause of this difficulty of adhering to the old signature notation, for the variation in number of leaves to signature in the smaller sizes made it as difficult to follow strictly signature notation in the olden times as in our own. These varieties have arisen from the different systems of *quiring* and *gathering*, from the adoption of *insets*, and from the printing on one-third, one-half, or two-thirds of the full sheet, and thus the leaves to signatures instead of following the supposed normal rule of 2 to folio, 4 to 4°, 8 to 8°, and 12 to 12°, are often as follows:—

In f°, the leaves to signatures run in *twos*, *fours*, *sixes*, and *eights*.

In 4°, they are in *fours*, *sixes*, and *eights*.

In the larger octavos they are often in *fours*, though the width is less than three-fourths. In other octavos they are usually in *eights*, but half-sheet books occur in *fours*.

In 12° they are in *sixes* or *twelves*.

In 16° they are in *eights* or *sixteens*.

In 18° they are in *sixes* or *twelves*.

In 24° they are in *sixes* or *twelves*.

In 32° they are in *eights* or *sixteens*.

Among the above anomalies the chief trouble met with in old books is the occurrence of works in eights in many differing sizes, and the consequent adoption of the term 8° by purists in cataloguing for all such books, though they may vary to the extent of five inches in height. To say a book is an 8° because it has eight leaves to a signature, is simply to close the question at once without attempting the solution of the difficulties surrounding size notation. Books in eights are of all sizes from the 48° to the folio. But though in any attempt at a system of size-notation, we must give up this signature rule of eight, the Committee think the names of these smaller *eights* should bear an affinity to the term, and be called according to the diminution of their size in even multiples of eight (16 and 32), while books in *twelves* should run in the multiples of six (12, 18, 24). The use of the term 16° for all old books of the 16° height in *eights*, can be modified when they are of the broad form by the term *square* being prefixed.

Though a perfect regularity of gradation in a table of sizes is an object worth attaining, yet, as it interferes with actual fact, the filling up of the scheme by intervals of half an inch between the terms has alone been attempted.

The smaller sizes given embrace the demy-size measurements within each term, and allow for slight varieties in the other paper sizes, for those in papers of modern makers no longer trammelled by the hand-made paper measurements, and for the changes of size usually developed under the manipulations of the binder.

The notation of the table will be found to suit books of all times and of all countries, and it is believed would contribute to the drawing closer of the agreement between size-and-signature-notation ; as by noting both the height of the book and the number of leaves following the signature, an appropriate term for every size will be found in the table.

The Committee recommend that the table be printed on a card with the explanation at its back, and circulated among the members of the Association.

EXPLANATION OF THE TABLE OF SIZES.

The table embraces all the sizes of books, in steps of half-inches from each other from 48° to imperial folio (23 in.), and also includes a term for the largest folios (about 30 in.). In verifying the sizes of the smaller books it is necessary to give especial attention to the question of their being in the *eights* or in the *twelves* series.

Sizes slightly differing from those given, *i.e.*, being between the terms, are to have the one applied to them to which their height is nearest; all cut and bound books thus between two sizes being called by the larger, and all uncut books by the smaller term nearest them.

TABLE OF SIZES OF BOOKS.

	Notation.	Height in Inches.	Width.	Leaves to Signature.	Wire line in laid or hand made Papers.
Folio.	Atlas f° ....(1)	Circa 30	⅔ to ¾	In twos, fours, sixes and eights.	Perpendicular.
	La. f° or Imp. f°...(5)	21½-23			
	Roy. f°...(5)	18½-21			
	F° ....(2)	13½-18			
	Sm. f° ....(3, 4)	8½-13			
Quarto.	La. 4° or Imp. 4° (5)	13½-16	4/5	In fours, sixes, and eights.	Horizontal.
	Roy. 4° (5)	11½-13			
	4° ....(2)	9½-11			
	Sm. 4° ....(3)	7½-9			
Octavo et infra.	La. 8° or Imp. 8° (5)	10½-11	⅔ to ¾	In eights, and sometimes fours.	Perpendicular.
	Roy. 8° (5)	9½-10	,,	,,	,,
	8° ....(2)	8-9	,,	In eights.........	,,
	Sm. 8° ....(3)	6½-7½	,,	,, ...	,,
	12°		,,	In sixes and twelves	Horizontal.
	16° ....(6)	5½-6	⅔ to ⅘	In eights and sixteens	Horizontal and Perpendicular.
	18°		⅔ to ¾	In sixes, twelves and eighteens	Horizontal.
	24°	4-5	,,	In sixes and twelves	Perpendicular.
	32°		,,	In eights and sixteens	,,
	48° or m° ....(7)	under 4	,,		

1. Including "elephant," "columbia," &c.
2. Including "medium," "demy," and "crown."
3. Including "copy," "post," "foolscap" and "pot."
4. Of preceding centuries.
5. Of this century.
6. Including sq. 16°, and all books of this size, in eights.
7. Including 48°, 64°, &c. "Minimo" for the smallest books.

The measurement of the paper, not of the binding-cover, is to be taken.

The width in all 4° books, and of other small books denominated *square* is above $\frac{3}{4}$, *i.e.* $\frac{4}{5}$ of the height, and the width of other books (the usual shape) from $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of their height. Oblong-shaped books are to be so designated in addition to f°, 4°, 8°, &c., according to their relative size. The modifications, *la.*, *imp.*, *roy.*, and *sm.*, are not applied to sizes below 8°, as being of infrequent occurrence or slight variation, but if on identifying by size and signature, a book cannot otherwise be truthfully described, they can be used.

With regard to books of the usual width, about 10 or 11 inches high, those of the preceding centuries should usually be described as small folios, but those of the present, and perhaps the latter part of the last century, as large, or royal and imperial octavos.

In early printed books, and in all bibliographical curiosities, it is advisable that actual measurement should be given in addition to the nominal size-signature notation of the table.

Inlaid and stilted books are to have both real and factitious sizes noted.